



# Planning Your School Visit

## A Guide to Teacher-Led Field Trips

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park is an exciting off-campus classroom for studying Texas and United States history. As it is not always possible to schedule ranger-led education programs, this brochure is intended to help teachers plan their own guided trips. The study of these missions is specifically mentioned in Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (T.E.K.S.) for Grades Four and Seven. By visiting some of the most impressive Spanish Colonial sites in the United States, you can provide your students with a valuable learning experience.

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**Reservations are required.**

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**Admission is FREE!**

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**Bus parking available.**

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### How To Make a Reservation

School groups are required to notify the park before scheduling a visit. To make a reservation, contact the Park Education Coordinator at (210) 534-8875 ext. 258, or email the education office at [saan\\_education@nps.gov](mailto:saan_education@nps.gov). Reservations can also be made online through our website at [www.nps.gov/saan/education/educationcontents.htm](http://www.nps.gov/saan/education/educationcontents.htm).

We require one adult per every 10 students. All students must be accompanied by an adult **chaperone** at all times while visiting the park.

Your **confirmation letter** will include a park brochure, map, and teacher re-

source packet to help you plan your visit.

Please have the following information ready when you call:

- School name and mailing address
- Your name and a daytime phone number. Please give a specific time when you can be reached (daily planning period or lunch)
- Date and time of proposed visit
- Number of students in your group
- Email Address

### Scheduling

The best time to schedule a field trip is in the fall or winter, closer to the time your class is actually studying the Spanish period. If you plan to come in spring, schedule it on a Monday, Tues-

day, or Wednesday. The park has fewer schools at these times; less crowding will increase the educational impact and enjoyment for your students.

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## Teacher Resources

We suggest making a **planning trip** to the park before your school visit. First-hand knowledge of the mission sites and their exhibits will make your visit more valuable and relaxing.

You can find **classroom and field trip resource materials** on the park's web page, <http://www.nps.gov/saan/education/educationcontents.htm>. Listed are pre- and post-visit activities based on grade level with corresponding T.E.K.S. requirements. In addition to a history of the park, curriculums have been developed for intermediate, middle, and high

school students. Check your media center for the park movie "*Gente de Razón: People of Reason*", which can also be purchased at the park for a nominal cost.

Mention and show your educator identification at any of the park's bookstores, operated by Western National Parks Association, and receive a 20% discount.



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## Protecting the Missions

Review the following rules so both students and chaperones know what is expected of them.

***Respect the historic mission structures:*** The stonework of the missions is old and crumbling. Sitting, standing, and climbing on and touching the stone walls can damage them. Please help by keeping all members of your group off park structures. Groups will be asked to leave for serious infractions.

***Respect the right of others to enjoy the park:*** The churches are active places of worship. Please enter quietly and respectfully. Do not enter if a wedding, funeral, or Mass is taking place. Loud noises and disruptive behavior on the mission grounds can spoil the experience for other visitors. Buses are asked to park with their engines turned off.



***Respect each other:*** Students are still in school, so classroom rules apply while visiting the park. Running, pushing, or yelling is not permitted in the mission compounds and buildings. Students must stay with their assigned chaperone.

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## Places to Visit

*Please check-in with a Park Ranger before starting your tour. Travel time between each site is 15 minutes.*

### Visitor Center

The park's Visitor Center is located near the entrance to Mission San José. Explore the museum and bookstore. View the 23-minute documentary, *Gente de Razón*, that tells the story of the missions and the people who lived here. The film is shown every 30 minutes, and seating is on a first-come first-served basis - no reservations. The film is also available in Spanish with advance notice.



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**Mission Concepción** The mission church stands proudly as the oldest unrestored stone church in America. Tour the original church and adjoining *convento*, and view remnants of 18th-century frescoes. Tour time: 30 minutes



**Mission San Juan** Surrounded by farm and pastureland, San Juan provides an opportunity to learn about farming and agriculture. A nature trail winds 3/10 mile along the river, where students can learn about native plants and see indigenous wildlife. Tour time: 30 minutes



**Mission Espada** Espada provides a respite from the bustling city. Tour the small but exquisite church with its familiar layered bell-tower and stone-carved entrance portal with its Moorish designs. Visit the old school, now housing a museum on ranching and *vaqueiros*. Tour time: 30 minutes



**Acequia System with Aqueduct and Dam** The missions were dependent on an extensive *acequia* system - a 15-mile network of irrigation ditches providing water to farm *labores*. Espada's acequia is still operational with a 270-year old dam, aqueduct, and ditches. Tour time for aqueduct and for dam: 15 minutes each



**Mission San José** Known as the “Queen of the Missions”, this is the largest of the missions and was almost fully restored to its original design in the 1930s. Receive a glimpse of what mission life was like inside the walled compound. Tour time: 60 minutes (includes the Grist Mill)



**Grist Mill** Recently restored to operating condition, the 18th-century San José grist mill is located on the north side of the compound. Tour time: 60 minutes (includes Mission San José)





## Logistics



National Park Service  
U.S. Department  
of the Interior

San Antonio Missions  
National Historical Park  
2202 Roosevelt Avenue  
San Antonio, TX 78210

### Park Hours:

Open daily 9:00 a.m. to  
5:00 p.m.

The park is closed on  
Thanksgiving Day,  
December 25, and Janu-  
ary 1.

Park Visitor Center at  
Mission San José  
(210) 932-1001

Park Headquarters  
(210) 534-8833

### Comments? Write to:

Education Coordinator  
San Antonio Missions  
National Historical Park  
2202 Roosevelt Avenue  
San Antonio, TX 78210

The National Park Service  
cares for the special  
places saved by the  
American people so that  
all may experience our  
heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

## Accessibility

Missions are historic sites. Accessibility varies from site to site. All have paved walkways for wheelchair access. A wheelchair is available at each site for loan during your visit. All restrooms are accessible. The park film is close-captioned for the hearing impaired. Reserved handicap parking is available.

## Parking

Bus parking is available in designated areas only. Bus parking is not allowed in the visitors' lot or in church parking lots. Buses parked in unauthorized areas will be ticketed.

## Picnics in the Park

Food and drink are not allowed inside the mission compounds. A limited number of picnic tables are available at each site on a first come, first serve basis. Picnic areas can **not** be reserved. You will be responsible for cleaning up after your group. Picnic facilities are also available in nearby Espada Park, Concepción Park and Mission County Park.

## Restrooms

Missions Concepción, Espada, and San Juan have limited restroom facilities. The park's Visitor Center at Mission San José can accommodate large groups. Water fountains are available at all sites.

## Bookstore

Two bookstores are located at Mission San José, operated by the Western National Parks Association. Smaller outlets are available at the other sites.

## Weather

Most activities at the missions take place outside. Be prepared for the weather — hot, cold, rain, etc.

## Safety

- Stone walls are fragile; please keep off.
- Watch for fire ants, cactus, poison ivy and other potentially harmful elements that can be found in the park.
- Be careful where you walk. Poisonous snakes live in the park, especially along the nature trail.
- Take pictures and memories with you and leave only footprints.

## Ranger-led Education Programs

In addition, free Ranger-led education programs designed for elementary and middle school students are offered with at least one-month advance notice. Offerings include curriculum-based activities that adhere to content standards and concepts as defined by Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Groups of up to 150 students maximum can be accommodated for education programs by dividing into small groups of 50. Each group will visit a different mission site. Programs vary according to site, so each group will get a different program.

Ranger-led education programs are not the same as Teacher-led field trips.

## Teacher Workshops

The park also offers free Teacher Workshops that meet Texas continuing education standards. Call for more information or visit our webpage.

